

Can. H. 911  
A  
354

# CANADA'S OPPORTUNITY

*A Review of Butler's "Great Lone  
Land" in its Relation to Present Day  
Conditions and Future Prospects* ❖ ❖



By  
MAJOR ROBERT LARMOUR

354

Toronto  
William Briggs  
1907



## CANADA'S OPPORTUNITY.

---

HERE are comparatively few people of the present generation of Canadians who know much—if anything at all—of the very important services rendered to the country by Lieut.

W. F. Butler (now General Butler) in 1870-71, in connection with the Red River Expedition for the suppression of the Riel Rebellion, and also as Commissioner to the Indian tribes of the Saskatchewan. In the performance of the duties of this mission he was obliged to travel from the Red River Settlement to Rocky Mountain House and back, a distance of some 3,000 miles, in the winter season. It is the story of this famous journey which he tells in his book, "The Great Lone Land," and the information and advice which he gives to the Government of the Dominion in his report, that I propose to briefly review in this pamphlet.

I was personally well acquainted with Lieut. Butler when he was stationed with his regiment, the 69th, at Brantford, in 1867-8. He was then a general favorite among all who knew him; his love of adventure was a prominent characteristic, even in such a quiet locality and amidst surroundings that gave but little scope for its indulgence.

It was evident, too, at that time, that he was possessed by a feeling of discontent at the restraints of the service, or rather the obstacles in the way of advancement in the service. Merit in those days did not count for much if the requisite purchase money was not available to the subaltern. Some evidence of this feeling of resentment occurs in his narrative, though not in such a way as to mar its general harmony and highly interesting matter, but there is no evidence of it in the report made to Lieut.-Governor Archibald. That document stands out clear and clean, not even the semblance of a selfish thought to be found in it; strong, able, thoroughly well digested and comprehensive—the work of an enthusiastic friend of the poor red man and of humanity—a work breathing a patriotism of the highest order—not the cheap, every-day sort of patriotism that comes so lightly and trippingly from the pens of writers and

the tongues of speech-makers, but that patriotism which is not confined to the narrow limits of one's own nationality and religion, but looks far into the future, sees new conditions that are to evolve out of the past and present, conditions that would accord to the poor savage protection instead of persecution, sympathy instead of hatred, justice instead of cruelty.

In opening his narrative Lieut. Butler gives a short sketch of the circumstances that led up to his joining the Red River Expedition under the command of Col. Wolseley, from which I quote the following:—

“ It was about the end of the year 1869 that I became conscious of having experienced a decided check in my life. One day I received from a distinguished military functionary an intimation to the effect that a company in Her Majesty's Service would be at my disposal, provided I could produce the sum of £1,100. Some dozen years previous to the date of this letter I entered the British Army, and by slow process of existence had reached a position among the subalterns of the Regiment technically known as first for purchase; but now when the moment arrived to turn that position to account, I found that neither the £1,100 of regulation amount nor the £400 of regulation items (terms very familiar now, but soon, I trust, to be for ever obsolete) were forthcoming, and so it came about that younger hands began to pass me in the race of life. What was to be done? What course lay open? Serve on; let the dull routine of barrack life grow duller; go from Canada to the Cape, from the Cape to the Mauritius, from Mauritius to Madras, from Madras goodness knows where, and trust to delirium tremens, yellow fever, or cholera morbus for promotion and advancement; or, on the other hand, quit the service, become, in the lapse of time, governor of a penitentiary, secretary to a London Club, or Adjutant of Militia; and yet here was the rub—when every fibre of one's existence beat in unison with the true spirit of military adventure, when the old feeling, which in boyhood had made the study of history a delightful pastime, in late years had grown into fixed, unalterable longing for active service, when the whole current of thought ran in the direction of adventure, no matter in what climate, or under what circumstances—it was hard, beyond the measure of words, to sever in an instant the link that bound one to a life where such aspirations were still possible of fulfilment; to separate one's destiny for ever from the noble profession of arms, to become an outsider, to admit that the twelve best years of life had been a useless dream, and to bury oneself far away in some western wilderness out of reach or sight of the red coat or sound of bugle.”

From the foregoing it will be seen what a barrier the purchase system was to his ambition as a soldier, but it did not discourage him altogether. When the Red River trouble arose, and Butler, who was then in England, heard of the proposed military expedition from Eastern Canada to put down the rebellion, he at once cabled the commander this brief message: "Please remember me." Without waiting for a reply, he took passage by the first steamer to sail from Liverpool, and arrived in Toronto, only to learn there was no vacancy for him. "My good fellow," said the leader of the expedition (Colonel Wolseley), "there's not a vacant berth for you. I got your telegram, but the whole army in Canada wanted to get on the expedition." But he was not to be put off so easily. "I think, sir," he said, "there is one berth still vacant; you will want to know what they are doing in Minnesota and along the flank of your march, and you have no one to tell you." Col. Wolseley's reply was, "You are right, we do want a man out there. Look, now, start for Montreal by first train to-morrow. By to-night's mail I will write the General, recommending your appointment."

Thus it was Butler received the appointment which led up to a second appointment by Lieut.-Governor Archibald and to his trip to the Rocky Mountains. Before starting he had occasion to visit Québec, and he thus records his impressions of the scenery:

"And with what loveliness does the whole face of the plain, river, lake and mountains turn from the iron clasp of icy winter to kiss the balmy lips of returning summer, and to welcome his bridal gifts of sun and shower.

"The trees open their leafy lids to look at him, the brooks and streamlets break forth into songs of gladness, the lakes uncover their sweet faces, and their mimic shores steal down in quiet evening to bathe themselves in the transparent waters—far into the depths of the great forest speeds the glad message of returning glory, and graceful fern, and soft, velvet moss, and white, wax-like lily peep forth to cover rock and fallen tree and wreck of last year's autumn, in one great sea of foliage. There are many landscapes which can never be painted, photographed or described, but which the mind carries away instinctively to look at again and again in after time—these are the celebrated views of the world, and they are not easy to find. From the Queen's rampart, on the Citadel of Quebec, the eye sweeps over a greater diversity of landscape than is probably to be found in any other one spot in the universe. Blue mountain, far stretching river, foaming cascade, the white sails of ocean ships, the black trunks of many-sized guns,

the pointed roofs, the white village nestling amidst its fields of green, the great isle in mid-channel, the many shades of color from deep blue pinewood to yellow corn-field—in what other spot on the earth's broad bosom lie grouped together in a single glance so many of these 'things of beauty' which the eye loves to feast on and to place in memory as joys for ever?"

While the Red River Expedition was being organized there was much talk of Fenians attacking it while on the march from Lake Superior. The American papers were full of rumors of Fenian expeditions being organized, and altogether there was much reason to think that some such attempt might be made. It was on this account that Butler was commissioned to proceed by the way of Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, to the Red River, and, if practicable, to visit Fort Garry, and then turn eastward to meet the Expedition and give Col. Wolseley the benefit of what information he could obtain concerning Fenians, as well as the situation at Fort Garry itself.

Butler describes in his book the incidents connected with this journey, his interview with Riel at Fort Garry, and the subsequent journey down the Red River, across Lake Winnipeg, up the Winnipeg River, through Lake of the Woods and Rainy River, to Rainy Lake, at the head of which he met the Expedition, with which he returned to Fort Garry, only to find that Riel had fled. That part of the narrative which describes the hardships the men of the Expedition had to undergo is most interesting, especially to Canadians. The information that Lieut. Butler was able to give Col. Wolseley must have been of very great assistance. Just here I quote a few paragraphs from his description of his visit to President Riel, or rather, the President's visit to him after having made a vain attempt to make him prisoner.

"Returning from the east on the St. Boniface side of the Red River, I was conducted by my companion into the Fort. His [Riel's] private residence was situated within the walls, and to it we proceeded. Upon entering the gate I took in at a glance the surroundings—ranged in a semi-circle, with their muzzles pointing towards the entrance, stood some six or eight field-pieces; on each side and in front were bare looking, whitewashed buildings. The ground and the houses looked equally dirty, and the whole aspect of the place was desolate and ruinous.

"A few ragged looking, dusky men, with rusty firelocks and still more rusty bayonets, stood lounging about. We drove through

without stopping, and drew up at the door of my companion's house, which was situated at the rear of the buildings I have before spoken of. From the flag-staffs floated two flags, one the Union Jack, in shreds and tatters, the other a well-kept bit of bunting, having the fleur-de-lis and a shamrock on a white field. Once in the house my companion asked if I would see Riel.

"To call on him? certainly not," was my reply.

"But if he calls on you?"

"Then I will certainly see him," replied I.

The gentleman who had thus spoken soon left the room. There stood in the centre of the apartment a small billiard table. I took up a cue and commenced a game with the only other occupant of the room, the same individual who on the previous evening acted as messenger to the Indian settlement.

We had played some half-dozen strokes when the door opened and my friend returned. Following him closely came a short, stout man with a large head, a sallow, puffy face, a sharp, restless eye, a square-cut, massive forehead, overhung by a mass of long and thickly clustering hair, and marked with well-cut eyebrows—a remarkable looking face, all the more so, perhaps, because it was to be seen in a land where such things are a rare sight.

This was Louis Riel, the head and front of the Red River Rebellion—the President, the little Napoleon, the Ogre, or whatever else he may be called. He was dressed in a curious mixture of clothing—a black frock-coat, vest and trousers; but the effect of this somewhat clerical costume was not a little marred by a pair of Indian moccasins, which nowhere look more out of place than on a carpeted floor.

M. Riel advanced to me and we shook hands with all that *empressment* so characteristic of hand-shaking on the American continent. Then there came a pause. My companion had laid down his cue. I still retained mine in my hands, and more as a means of bridging the awkward gulf of silence which followed the introduction, I asked him to continue the game—another stroke or two, and the moccasined President began to move nervously about the window recess. To relieve his burdened feelings I inquired if he ever indulged in billiards; a rather laconic 'never' was his reply.

"Quite a loss," I answered, making an absurd stroke across the table, 'a capital game.'

"I had scarcely uttered this profound sentiment when I beheld the President moving hastily towards the door, muttering as he went, 'I see I am intruding here.' There was hardly time to say, 'Not at all,' when he vanished."

Knowing Butler as well as I did, it was just how I would have expected him to act under such circumstances—his making "an

absurd stroke across the table" at such a critical moment was just like him, and must have proved in the highest degree disconcerting to the pompous President. However, Riel was brought back into the room by the companion once more and the two were then left alone. The conversation that followed is given in full in the narrative, but it may be summed up by my saying that Butler gained a great deal more information from M. Riel than M. Riel did from Butler. I quote just one or two of Butler's closing paragraphs :

"At one time, when speaking of the efforts he (Reil) had made for the advantage of his country, he grew very excited, walking hastily up and down the room with theatrical attitudes and declamation, which he evidently fancied had the effect of imposing on his listener; but, alas! for the vanity for man, it only made him appear ridiculous; the moccasins sadly marred the exhibition of presidential power.

"An Indian speaking with the solemn gravity of his race looks right manful enough, as with moose-clad leg his moccasined feet rest on prairie grass or frozen snow-drift; but this picture of the black-coated Metis playing the part of Europe's great soldier in the garb of a priest and the shoes of a savage looked simply absurd. At length M. Riel appeared to think he had enough of the interview, for stopping in front of me he said:

"Had I been your enemy you would have known it before. I heard you would not visit me, and, although I felt humiliated, I came to see you to show you my pacific inclinations.' Then, darting quickly from the room, he left me."

In many of the descriptions in his narrative Butler breaks away from mere detail and indulges in that kind of poetical language which, it would seem, he was unable to suppress. I quote an instance:

"A man may journey very far through the lone spaces of the earth without meeting with another Winnipeg river. In it nature has contrived to place her two great units of earth and water in strange and wild combinations. To say that the Winnipeg river has an immense volume of water, that it descends 360 feet in a distance of 160 miles, that it is full of eddies and whirlpools, of every variation of waterfall, from chutes to cataracts, that it expands into lonely pine-cliffed lakes and far-reaching, island-studded bays, that its bed is cumbered with immense wave-polished rocks, that its vast solitudes are silent and its cascades ceaselessly active—to say all this is but to tell in bare items of fact the narrative of its beauty. For the Winnipeg, by the multiplicity of



its perils and the ever-changing beauty of its character, defies the description of civilized men as it defies the puny efforts of civilized travel. It seems part of the savage—fitted alone for him and for his ways, useless to carry the burden of man's labor, but useful to shelter the wild things of wood and water which dwell in its waves and along its shores. And the red man who steers his little birch-bark canoe through the foaming waters of the Winnipeg, how well he knows its various ways. To him it seems to possess life and instinct, he speaks of it as one would of a high-mettled charger which will do anything if he be rightly handled. It gives him his test of superiority, his proof of courage. . . . For hundreds of years the Indian has lived amidst these rapids; they have been the playthings of his boyhood, the realities of his life, the instinctive habit of his old age. What the horse is to the Arab, what the dog is to the Esquimaux, what the camel is to those who journey across the Arabian deserts, so is the canoe to the Ojibbeway."

Describing the difficulties to be overcome and the hardships to be endured by the force on its march from Lake Superior to the head of Rainy Lake, Lieut. Butler speaks in the highest terms of the zeal and energy displayed by both Col. Wolseley and the men forming his force. Of the first he says:

"But there are men whose perseverance hardens, whose energy quickens beneath difficulty and delay, whose genius, like some spring bent back on its own base, only gathers strength from resistance. These men are the natural soldiers of the world; and fortunate it is for those who carry swords and rifles and are dressed in uniform, when such men are allowed to lead them, for with such men as leaders, the following, if it be British, will be all right—nay, if it be any nationality on earth it will be all right too. Marches will be made beneath suns which by every rule of known experience ought to prove fatal to nine-tenths of those exposed to them, rivers will be crossed, deserts will be traversed, and mountain passes pierced, and men who cross and traverse and pierce them will only marvel that doubt and mistrust should ever have entered into their minds as to the feasibility of the undertaking. The man who led the little army across the northern wilderness towards the Red River was well fitted in every respect for the work which was to be done. He was young in years, but he was old in service; the highest professional training had developed to the utmost of his ability, while it had left unimpaired the natural instinctive faculty of doing a thing for oneself, which the knowledge of a given rule for a given action so frequently destroys. Nor was it only by his energy, perseverance and professional training that Wolseley was fitted to lead men upon the very exceptional service

now required from them. Officers and soldiers will always follow when those three qualities are combined in the man who leads them; but they will follow with delight the man who, to those qualities, unites a happy aptitude for command, which is neither taught nor learned, but which is instinctively possessed."

Butler's estimate of Col. Wolseley's qualifications as a military leader might have been considered as overdrawn at that time, but with the light that after events have brought to us—such as Tel-el-Keber, Koomassie, and the fact that he reached the highest rung in the ladder of military fame, that of Commander-in-Chief of the British Army—shows that his estimate was based on correct deductions, drawn with ability by a man capable of seeing and knowing and appreciating such qualifications in a brother officer; it was honest conviction that guided his pen when he wrote these words, "A happy aptitude for command, which is neither to be taught nor learned, but which is instinctively possessed."

And here again Butler indulges in one of his bitter outbreaks at the treatment of the British soldier. Speaking of the rank and file of the 60th Regiment that made part of the Expedition, he says:

"Who are the rank and file? They are the poor wild birds whose country has cast them off, and who repay their country by offering their lives for her glory; the men who take the shilling, who drink, who drill, who march to music, who fill the graveyards of Asia; the men who stand sentry at the gates of world-famous fortresses, who are old when their brothers are still young, who are bronzed and burned by fierce suns, who sail over seas packed in great masses, who watch at night over great and lonely magazines, who shout 'Who comes there!' through the darkness, who dig in the trenches, who are blown to pieces in mines, who are torn by shot and shell, who have carried the flag of England into every land, who have made her name famous through the nations, who are the nation's pride in her hour of peril and her plaything in the hour of prosperity—these are the Rank and File. We are a curious nation; until lately we bought our rank as we buy our mutton in the market, and we found officers and gentlemen where other nations have found thieves and smugglers. Until lately we flogged our files with a cat-o'-nine-tails, and found heroes by treating men like dogs."

Of the members of Riel's Government Butler entertained even a worse opinion than of Riel himself, judging from the following reference to the Hon. W. B. O'Donoghue:

"The Hon. W. B. O'Donoghue was one of those miserable

beings who seem to inherit the vices of every calling and nationality to which they can claim kindred. Educated for some semi-clerical profession, which he abandoned for the more congenial trade of treason, rendered apparently secure by distance, he remained in garb the cleric, while he plundered his prisoners and indulged in the fashionable pastime of gambling with purloined property and racing with confiscated horses—a man whose revolting countenance at once suggested the hulks and-prison garb, and who, in any other land save America, would probably long since have reached the convict's level for which Nature designed him."

Of the Adjutant-General, the Hon. Lepine, he says: "He seems to have possessed all the vices of the Metis without any of the virtues."

When Lieut.-Governor Archibald made the proposal to Butler to accept a mission to the Saskatchewan valley and the Indian countries as far west as the Rocky Mountains, he suggested that Butler should take a couple of days to think the matter over. "There is no necessity to consider the matter over," he replied, "my mind is already made up; and I will start in half an hour, if necessary."

As to the object of his long journey to the Rocky Mountains I quote a few paragraphs from the instructions given him by the Governor, which will give some idea of the work he was to undertake:

"It is the desire of the Lieutenant-Governor that you should examine the matter entirely from an independent point of view, giving His Honour, for the benefit of the Government of Canada, your views of the state of matters on the Saskatchewan in reference to the necessity of troops being sent there, basing your report upon what you shall find by actual examination. You will be expected to report upon the whole question of the existing state of affairs in that territory, and to state your views on what may be necessary to be done in the interests of peace and order. You are to ascertain, as far as possible, in what places and among what tribes of Indians, and what settlement of whites, the smallpox is now prevailing, including the extent of its ravages and every particular you can ascertain; with the rise and spread of the disease. You are to take with you such small supplies of medicines as shall be considered by the Board of Health here suitable and proper for the treatment of smallpox, and you will obtain written instructions for the proper treatment of the disease, and will leave a copy thereof with the chief officer of each fort you pass, and with any

clergyman or other intelligent person belonging to the settlement outside the forts.

"You will also ascertain, as far as in your power, the number of Indians on the line between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains; the different nations and tribes into which they are divided, and the particular locality inhabited and the language spoken, and also the names of the principal chiefs of each tribe.

"You will also ascertain, as far as you can, the nature of the trade in furs conducted upon the Saskatchewan, the number and nationality of the persons employed in what has been called the Fur Trade there, and what portion of the supplies, if any, comes from the United States territory, and what portion of the furs are sent thither; and generally to make such inquiries as to the source of trade in that region as may enable the Lieutenant-Governor to form an accurate idea of the commerce of the Saskatchewan."

It will be seen from the above extract that Butler had no easy task to perform outside the difficulties and hardships inseparable from such a journey at such a time.

He was to make himself at once doctor, lawyer, diplomat, historian, geographer, census enumerator, agriculturalist, navigator—in short, he was asked to furnish the Government at Ottawa with information that would enable it to formulate a government for the Territories—one best suited to actual conditions, one that would meet the actual pressing needs. A general ignorance of existing conditions had been a difficulty which was overcome or removed by the valuable service that Butler rendered in the fulfilment of duty assigned to him.

I now turn again to his narrative. On his first night out on the prairies after passing Portage la Prairie, the last settlement to the west, he gives us a glimpse of his feelings in the following remarks:

"It was a dark, cold night, and the wind howled dismally through some bare thickets near by. When the fire flickered low and the wind wailed and sighed amongst the dry white grass, it was impossible to resist a feeling of utter loneliness. A long journey lay before me, nearly three thousand miles would have to be traversed before I could hope to reach the neighborhood of even this lonely spot itself, this last verge of civilization; the terrific cold of a winter of which I had only heard, a cold so intense that travel ceases except in the vicinity of the forts of the Hudson's Bay Company—a cold

which freezes mercury, and of which the spirit registers 80 degrees of frost—this was to be the thought of many nights, the ever-present companion of many days. Between this little camp-fire and the great mountains to which my steps were turned, there stood in that long twelve hundred miles but six houses, and in these houses a terrible malady had swept nearly half the inhabitants out of life. So, lying down that night for the first time, with all this before me, I felt as one who had to face not a few of those things, from which is evolved that strange mystery called death, and looking out into the vague dark immensity around me, saw in it the gloomy shapes and shadowy outlines of the by-gone which memory hides but to produce at such times."

In the early days of his journey Butler became aware of a fact which he records; it is that the Indian has a most holy horror of the law and all its ways. There is nothing so terrible to the savage as the idea of imprisonment; "the wilder the bird the harder he will feel the cage," and the next thing to imprisonment is a government proclamation.

As might have been expected from such a man, Butler grew very fond of his little black horse, "Blackie," and the following will illustrate the relations that existed between the horse and its rider.

"But my little Blackie seldom got a respite from the saddle; he seemed so well up in his work, so much stronger and better than the others, that day after day I rode him, thinking each day, 'Well, to-morrow I will let him run loose.' But when to-morrow came he used to look so fresh and well, carrying his little head as high as ever, that again I would put the saddle on his back, and another day's talk and companionship would still further cement our friendship, for I grew to like that horse as one only can like the poor dumb beast that serves us. I know not how it is, but horse and dog had worn themselves into my heart as few men have ever done in life."

Frequently again he refers to this friendship that existed between himself and Blackie. But poor Blackie was destined to meet a tragic death. On the 7th of November Butler reached the Saskatchewan, partially frozen over. After spending a day in futile attempts to effect a crossing by means of a raft, constructed from what material they had on hand, they were forced to wait for the ice to form clear across, which it did the following night. In the morning they carefully tested the ice, and deeming it of

sufficient strength, they ventured to cross over. I will give Butler's own description of what followed:

"Would it bear? that was the question. We went on it early, testing it with axe and sharp-pointed poles. In places it was very thin, but in other parts it was hard and solid to the blows. The dangerous spot was in the very centre of the river, where the water had shown through in round holes on the previous day, but we hoped to avoid these bad places by taking a slanting course across the channel. After walking backwards and forwards several times we determined to try a light horse. He was led out with a long piece of rope attached to his neck. In the centre of the stream the ice seemed to bend slightly as he passed over, but no break occurred, and in safety he reached the opposite side. Now came Blackie's turn. Somehow I felt uncomfortable about it. Blackie was taken out, led as before, tied by a long rope. I followed close behind him, to drive him if necessary. He did not need much driving, but took to the ice quite readily. We had got to the centre of the river, when the surface suddenly bent downwards, and, to my horror, the poor horse plunged deep into black, quick-running water! He was not three yards in front of me when the ice broke. I recoiled involuntarily from the black, seething chasm; the horse, though he plunged suddenly down, never let his head under water, but kept swimming manfully round the narrow hole, trying all he could to get upon the ice. All his efforts were useless; a cruel wall of ice struck his knees as he tried to lift them to the surface, and the current, running with immense velocity, repeatedly carried him back underneath. I shall never forget the way the poor brute looked at me—even now as I write these lines the whole scene comes back to me in memory, with all the vividness of a picture, and I feel again the horrible sensation of being utterly unable, although almost within touching distance, to give him help in his dire extremity—and if ever dumb animal spoke with unutterable eloquence, that horse called to me in his agony; he turned to me as to one from whom he had a right to expect assistance. I could not stand the scene any longer.

"Is there no help for him?" I cried to the other men.

"None whatever," was the reply, 'the ice is dangerous all around.'

"Then I rushed back to the shore and up to where my rifle lay, then back again to the fatal spot, where the poor beast still struggled against his fate. As I raised the rifle he looked at me so imploringly that my hand shook and trembled. Another instant and the deadly bullet crashed through his head, and, with one look never to be forgotten, he went down under the cold, unpitying ice!

"It may have been very foolish, perhaps, for poor Blackie

was only a horse, but for all that I went back to camp, and, sitting down in the snow, cried like a child. With my own hand I had taken my poor friend's life; but if there should exist somewhere in the regions of space that happy Indian paradise, where horses are never hungry and never tired, Blackie, at least, will forgive the hand that sent him there, if he can see the heart that long regretted him."

I will not attempt to follow the author through his harrowing description of the terrible ravages caused by smallpox among the tribes that he visited. Even the garrison of the Hudson's Bay forts had suffered dreadfully. At Carleton House, out of a garrison of sixty souls, no fewer than thirty-two had perished during the outbreak of '69-70. Only four recovered out of thirty-six that had taken the terrible infection.

At this point in his narrative Butler gives an extended description of the Fertile Belt of the Saskatchewan—too lengthy to be quoted here. Its boundaries he here lays down: "It has on the north a huge forest, on the west a huge mountain, on the south an immense desert, on the east an immense marsh. From the forest to the desert, there lies a distance varying from forty to one hundred and fifty miles, and from the marsh to the mountain, eight hundred miles of land lie spread in every varying phase of undulating fertility. This is the Fertile Belt, the future home of millions yet unborn."

On the 14th of November Butler started out from Carleton, continuing his journey with untiring energy towards the setting sun. I pass over the matter recorded from day to day—the many beautiful descriptions of scenery with which the author makes every day's journey interesting to the reader—until we find him nearing the end of his long and toilsome march. On the 20th of November he left Fort Pitt behind, and on the 26th he arrived at Edmonton, and on the 1st of December he again set out for the Rocky Mountain House, the last stage of his westward journey. Late on the 5th of December he reached a point which gave him his first view of the Rocky Mountains, and he describes the scene as he *only* could describe it. There was the great barrier that would bring to an end his long, long westward journey; there were the mountains of the "setting sun," the bridge of the world, and beyond their golden peaks was the red man's happy land, that

mystical land where tents are pitched 'midst everlasting verdure, countless herds, and the music of never-ceasing springs.

The next day brought him to the Rocky Mountain House and the westward journey is at an end—forty-one days out from Red River—eleven hundred and eighty miles made in twenty-seven days' actual travel.

It was Butler's original intention to return from this point southward along the foothills to the United States boundary, and thence to the head-waters of the Missouri; but this route would necessitate his passing through the country of the Blackfeet, and on this account he could not get a guide or companion of any kind to venture the journey with him, the Blackfeet were held to be so dangerous—so that he was obliged to give up that project and turn his face eastward and follow the valley of the Saskatchewan.

On the 12th of December he started on the return journey, but now he was obliged to make use of dogs instead of horses, and in consequence to follow a trail quite different from that taken on the outward journey, and a much longer one, too. However, he would make a friend and companion of a dog, as he had made a friend and companion of Blackie. Here are some of his remarks on the subject of dogs:

"Speaking now with the experience of nearly fifty days of dog travelling, and the knowledge of some twenty different trains of dogs of all sizes, ages, and degrees, watching them closely on the track and in the camp during thirteen hundred miles of travel, I may claim, I think, some right to assert that I possess no inconsiderable insight into the habits, customs and thoughts (for a dog thinks far better than many of his masters) of the 'hauling dog.' I do not for an instant mean to assert that these dogs were not, many of them, great rascals and rank impostors, but just as slavery produces certain vices in the slave, which it would be unfair to hold him accountable for, so does this perversion of the dog from his true use to that of a beast of burden produce, in endless variety, traits of cunning and deception in the hauling-dog. To be a thorough expert in dog-training a man must be able to imprecate freely and with considerable variety in at least three different languages. But whatever number of tongues the driver may speak, one is indispensable to perfection in the art, and that is French; curses seem useful adjuncts in any language, but curses delivered in French will get a train of dogs through or over anything. I never knew a man yet, or, for that matter, a woman,



worth much if they did not like dogs and horses, and I would always feel inclined to suspect a man who was shunned by a dog."

He also devotes to the subject of the buffalo a chapter which is very interesting. He explains its habits, its limits, its feeding grounds, the mode of hunting it by the Indian and the white man, and its inevitable end. Of this he says: "Never again will those countless herds roam from the Missouri to the Saskatchewan chased for his robe, for his beef, for sport, for the very pastime of his death; he is rapidly vanishing from the land. Far in the northern forests of the Athabasca a few buffaloes may for a time bid defiance to man, but they, too, must disappear and nothing be left of this giant beast save the bones that for many an age will whiten the prairies over which the great herds roamed at will in times before the white man came."

On the night of the 12th of January Butler speaks of experiencing the extreme cold of 51 below zero, sixty miles east from Carleton, the coldest of the winter, but immediately following this he speaks of "moments of pleasure," for he says:

"Great as were the hardships and privations of this winter journey, it had nevertheless many moments of keen pleasure, moments filled with those instincts of that long-ago time before our civilization and its servitude had commenced—that time when, like the Arab and the Indian, we were all rovers on the earth. This long journey of mine, despite its excessive cold, its nights under the wintry heavens, its days of ceaseless travel, had not yet grown monotonous or devoid of pleasure, and although there were moments, long before daylight, when the shivering scenes around the camp-fire froze one to the marrow, and I half-feared to ask myself how many more mornings like this will I have to endure, still, as the day wore on and the hour of the mid-day meal came round, and, warmed and hungry by exercise, I would relish with keen appetite the plate of moose steaks and the hot, delicious tea as camped amidst the snow, with buffalo robe spread out before the fire, and the dogs watching the feast with prospective ideas of bones and pan-licking, then the balance would veer back again to the side of enjoyment, and I could look forward to twice six hundred miles of ice and snow without one feeling of despondency."

Speaking of the fertility of the country where the two branches of the Saskatchewan, north and south, join, and now known as the "Forks," he says:

"It is impossible that the wave of life which rolls unceasingly into America can leave unoccupied this great fertile tract. As

I stood looking down on the silent waters, merging into the great single stream which here enters the forest region, the mind had little difficulty in seeing another picture, when the river forks would be a busy scene of commerce, and man's labor would waken echoes now answering only to the wild things of the plain and forest. At this point we leave the plains and the park-like country. The land of the prairie Indian and the buffalo hunter lies behind us—of the thick wood Indian and moose-hunter before us."

Cumberland House was reached on the 29th of January, and now his route lay in a south-easterly direction to Cedar Lake, thence to and over the ice of Lake Winnipegosis and on to Lake Manitoba.

On the night of February 19th he made his last camp south of Lake Manitoba, fifty miles from Fort Garry.

Referring to the treatment the red man had received at the hands of the white, and was still receiving, he gives full play to his enthusiastic sympathy. He says:

"Ever towards the setting sun drifts the flow of Indian migration, ever nearer and nearer to that glorious range of snow-clad peaks which the red man has so aptly named 'the mountains of the setting sun.' It is a mournful task to trace back through the long list of extinct tribes the history of this migration. Turning over the leaves of books that belong to that 'old Colonial time' of which Longfellow speaks, we find strange names of Indian tribes now utterly unknown. They are gone, and scarcely a trace remains of them. Others have left in lake and mountain-top the record of their names. Erie and Ottawa, Seneca and Cayuga tell of forgotten or almost forgotten nations which a century ago were great and powerful. But never at any time since first the white man was welcomed on the newly discovered shores of the Western Continent by his red brother, never has such disaster and destruction overtaken these poor wild, wandering sons of nature as at the moment in which we write. Of yore it was the pioneers of France, England and Spain with whom they had to contend, but now the whole white world is leagued in bitter strife against the Indian. The American and Canadian are only names that hide beneath the greed of united Europe. Terrible deeds have been wrought out in that Western land; terrible heart-sickening deeds of cruelty and rapacious infamy—have been I say? No! are to this day and hour, and never perhaps more sickening than now, in the full blaze of nineteenth century civilization. If on the long line of the American frontier, from the Gulf of Mexico to the British boundary, a single life is taken by an Indian, if even a horse or an ox be taken from a settler, the fact is chronicled in scores of

journals throughout the United States, but the reverse of the story we never know. The countless deeds of perfidious robbery, the ruthless murder done by white savages out in these western wilds, never find the light of day. The poor red man has no telegraph, no newspaper, no type, to tell his sufferings and his woes.

"My God! what a terrible tale could I not tell of these dark deeds done by the white savage against the far nobler red man! From southernmost Texas to most northern Montana there is but one universal remedy for Indian difficulty—kill him. Let no man tell me such is not the case. I answer I have heard it hundreds of times, 'Never trust a redskin unless he be dead.' The possession of the same noble qualities which we affect to reverence among our nations makes us kill him. If he would be as the African or the Asiatic it would be all right for him; if he would be our slave he might live, but as he won't be that, won't toil and delve and hew for us, and will persist in fishing and roaming over the beautiful prairies which the Great Spirit gave him; in a word, since he will be free—we kill him. Why do I call this wild child the great anomaly of the human race? I will tell you. Alone, amongst savage tribes, he has learned the lesson which the great Mother Nature teaches to her sons through the voices of the night, the forest and the solitude. This river, this mountain, this measureless meadow speak to him in a language of their own. Dwelling with them, he learns their varied tongues, and his speech becomes the echo of the beauty that lies spread around him. Every name for lake and river, for mountain or meadow, has its peculiar significance, and to tell the Indian title of such things is, generally, to tell the nature of them also. Ossian never spoke with the voice of the mist-shrouded mountain or the wave-beat shores of the isles more thoroughly than does this chief of the Blackfeet or the Sioux speak the voices of the things of earth and air amidst which his wild life is cast.

"I know that it is the fashion to hold in derision and mockery the idea that nobility, poetry, or eloquence exist in the wild Indian. I know that with that low brutality which has ever made the Anglo-Saxon race deny its enemy the possession of one atom of generous sensibility, that dull enmity which prompted us to call the Maid of Orleans a harlot, and to call Napoleon the 'Corsican robber'—I know that that same instinct glories in degrading the savage, whose chief crime is that he prefers death to slavery; glories in painting him devoid of every trait of manhood, worthy to share the fate of the wild beast of the wilderness—to be shot down mercilessly when seen."

" 'I swear to your Majesties,' said Columbus, 'that there is not in the world a better people than these, more affectionate, affable and mild.' "

"They are fast going and soon will be gone, but in after times men will judge more justly the poor creatures whom to-day we vilify and kill; men will go back again to those old books of travel, or, to those pages of 'Hiawatha' and 'Mohican' to find that far away from the borderland of civilization the wild red man, if more of the savage, was infinitely less of the brute than was the white ruffian who destroyed him."

The following extract from Lieut. Butler's report to Lieut.-Governor Archibald, March, 1871, will show how closely he studied the race he so eloquently champions:

"I must glance for a moment at the peculiarities in the mental condition of the Indians, which render extreme caution necessary in all intercourse between him and the white man. It is most difficult to make the Indian comprehend the true nature of the foreigner with whom he is brought in contact, or rather, I should say, that having his own standard by which he measures truth and falsehood, misery and happiness, and all the accompaniments of life, it is almost impossible to induce him to look at the white man from any point of view but his own. From this point of view everything is Indian. English, French-Canadian, Americans, are so many tribes inhabiting various parts of the world, whose land is bad, and who are not possessed of buffalo—for this last desideratum they (the strangers) send goods, missions, etc., to the Indians of the plains. 'Ah,' they say, 'if it was not for our buffalo where would you be? You would starve, your bones would whiten the prairies?' It is useless to tell them that such is not the case; they answer, 'Where, then, does all the pemmican go that they take away in your boats and in your carts?' With the Indian 'seeing is believing,' and the world is the visible one in which his wild life is cast. This being understood, the necessity for caution in communicating with the nation will at once be apparent, yet such caution on the part of those who seek the Indians as missionaries is not always observed. Too frequently the language suitable for civilized society has been addressed to the red man. He is told of governments and political changes in the political world, successive religious systems are laid before him by their various advocates. To-day he is told to believe one religion, to-morrow to have faith in another. Is it any wonder that, applying his own simple tests to so much conflicting testimony, he becomes utterly confused, unsettled and suspicious.

"To the white man, as a white man, the Indian has no dislike; on the contrary, he is pretty certain to receive him with kindness and friendship, provided always that the newcomer will adopt the native system, join the hunting camp, and live on the plains; but to the white man as a settler, or hunter, on his own account,

the Crees and Blackfeet are in direct antagonism. Ownership in any particular portion of the soil by an individual is altogether foreign to men who, in the course of a summer roam over five hundred miles of prairie."

It will be remembered that I quoted Lieut. Butler's opinion of Col. Wolseley as the leader of the Red River Expedition. I think it is but just to Lieut. Butler that I should quote Col. Wolseley's opinion of him at that time. Here is what Gen. Wolseley says, in his account of the Red River Expedition, in his book, "The Story of a Soldier":

"Before leaving Montreal for Lake Superior I received this telegram from home, 'Remember Butler, 69th Regiment.' I had made that officer's acquaintance when his battalion was quartered at Montreal in the following way. Every summer some half-dozen regimental officers were employed on a military survey of the frontier between Canada and the United States. With a view to obtain good men for this special service, a general order was published each year that officers wishing to be so employed should send me specimens of their military sketches. Amongst the applicants in 1868 was Lieutenant (now General Sir William) Butler. When he came to see me on this business I was much struck with the bright clearness of his intelligence and with his all-round intellectual superiority to the general run of our officers. I inquired about him from those who knew him well, and ascertained that he was not only by far the cleverest man in his battalion, but was well known generally for his energy and varied talents. Unable to employ him on this survey, I made a note of his name in case I should ever require the services of an officer who was evidently a good, active, talented and trustworthy man. I had long been in the habit of keeping a list of the best and ablest soldiers I knew, and was always on the look-out for those who could safely be entrusted with any special military piece of work. Butler struck me as being just such a man, so his name had been duly recorded upon it. This telegram did not therefore come from one of whom I knew nothing. When on my way to Thunder Bay he overtook me at Toronto. Up to that time the only information we had received from the Red River territory had come from unreliable sources. It came either from disloyal French-speaking priests, who had their own objects to serve, or from Hudson's Bay officials who wrote in terror of their lives and in a trading sense only, and, lastly, from the over-awed loyal minority, who feared to speak their minds openly, dreading the consequences of any bold expression of opinion. Lieutenant Butler was just the man that I wanted to go round through the United States to the Red River for the

purpose of finding out how matters really stood there, and then to come and meet me when I had made about half the distance to Fort Garry. At Toronto I gave him a brief outline of my plans, and told him the date I calculated upon for reaching Fort Frances, at the mouth of the Red River, where it falls into Lake Winnipeg, and, lastly, the day upon which I hoped to arrive at Fort Garry. I explained that I wanted an able soldier, whom I could trust implicitly, to go via the United States to the Red River Settlement, to judge for himself as to the condition of affairs there. I said I required information as to what this half-breed rising meant? Who were at the bottom of it? Was Riel a puppet in the hands of others, and what were the grievances, if any, of those with whom he acted? And so forth. Knowing the time of my probable arrival, he was to meet me in the neighborhood of Fort Frances upon the date I told him I hoped to reach it. This roving commission, that required so many rare qualities, was one after his own heart, and he was just the man to carry it out admirably.

"We parted at Toronto, both bound for the same destination, but by different routes. He carried out his instructions in the most satisfactory way, and met me in the middle of the great wild forest at the place and upon the date I had arranged with him. What a comfort it is to have able and determined men to deal with? But it is not easy to find men of Sir William Butler's genius. They are not available at every season, nor do they grow on every bush. Since then we have been comrades in many expeditions, and I am proud to reckon him amongst my best and most loyal friends. In genius and inventive power, as it can be employed in all the various phases of war, he is second to none of the able soldiers who have been my friends and associates throughout a long and varied military career. Even amongst them his great imaginative faculty, that quality so rare, so much above the other gifts required for excellence in military leaders, marked him out pre-eminently. It is to the apparent want of that uncommon gift on the part of commanders, more than to any lack of numbers of guns or horses, that we must often look for the inordinate prolongation of our wars. It is imagination, educated by practical experience in war, that enables the commander to foresee what his enemy will do under the circumstances which any change of policy may rapidly develop, so that he, the commander, may be ready promptly and effectively to checkmate him."

But. Col. Wolseley and Lieut. Butler were destined to meet again, to know each other more intimately, and to face dangers and difficulties far more serious than anything connected with the Red River Expedition. Col. Wolseley had become General Wolseley and Commander-in-Chief of the expedition against King Koffee in

West Africa, known as the Ashantee War, or as the March to Koomassie. There these two officers met again, and there General Wolseley once more found the "man he wanted."

In his account of this war General Wolseley again pays tribute to the genius of Captain Butler, as the following brief extract will show:

"Towards the end of October a dear friend, a congenial spirit, and old and trusted comrade, Captain (now General Sir William) Butler, had joined me at Cape Coast Castle. He had done right good service during our Expedition to the Red River, where I came to know him well, to admire his brilliant ability and to value his friendship highly.

"Possessing the warmest and most chivalrous of hearts, had he lived in mediæval times he would have been the knight-errant of every one in distress. Sympathy for all human, indeed, for all animal, suffering, was in him an active living force, always striving to help the poor in body and to comfort the weak-hearted. A loyal subject of the Crown, he yet always entertained a heart-felt sympathy for those whom he believed to be of a down-trodden race, and a lost cause appealed to all his deepest feelings. He was the first to recommend the raising of a regiment of Irish foot-guards, and he has lived to see carried out what he was scouted at and ridiculed for by some unwise men at the time.

"Amongst my many comrades he was remarkable for that inestimable gift in a commander, a keenly bright and lively imagination, an essential quality in which it would seem we were somewhat deficient during our recent long war in South Africa.

"He was just the soldier I wanted for a mission to the King of Western Akim. He possessed all the qualities required for such an independent undertaking. Of an iron constitution and indomitable energy, he was also an experienced traveller in wild and little known lands. In him the daring of his race was tempered by discretion, whilst a rare originality helped the ambition which burned within him. Above all things, he would be on this mission his own master."

From such estimates of each other it will be seen that these two military men had, from the first moment of their acquaintance, recognized each in the other that military genius which was to make, later in their career, a Field-marshal and Commander-in-Chief of the British Army of one, and of the other a General of international fame, whose great abilities have been utilized in remodelling the organization of the British Army.

It could have been nothing less than prophetic inspiration that guided the pen of Lieut. Butler when he wrote these words in the closing remarks of his report to the Government:

“Such, Sir, are the views which I have formed upon the whole question of the existing state of affairs in the Saskatchewan. They result from the thought and experience of many long days of travel through a large portion of the region to which they have reference. If I were asked from what point of view I have looked upon this question, I would answer: From that point which sees a vast country lying, as it were, silently awaiting the approach of the immense wave of human life which rolls unceasingly from Europe to America. Far off as lie the regions of the Saskatchewan from the Atlantic sea-board on which that wave is thrown, remote as are the fertile glades which fringe the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, still that wave of human life is destined to reach those beautiful solitudes, and to convert the wild luxuriance of their now useless vegetation into all the requirements of civilized existence. And if it be matter for desire, that across this immense continent, resting upon the two greatest oceans of the world, a powerful nation should arise, with the strength and the manhood which race and climate and tradition would assign to it—a nation that would look with no evil eye upon the old Motherland from whence it sprung, a nation which, having no bitter memories to recall, would have no idle prejudices to perpetuate: then surely it is worthy of all toil of hand and brain on the part of those who to-day rule this great link in the chain of such a future nationality, that it should remain no longer undeveloped, a prey to the conflicts of savage races, at once the garden and the wilderness of the central continent.”

It must have been inspiration that caused him, when, alone, he stood on the bluff point at the forks of the Saskatchewan, thirty-six years ago, after his long and weary journey, to stretch out his arms towards the east and to shout aloud to give vent to his pent-up enthusiasm: “Roll on, thou great wave of humanity! westward roll, till here you find a resting-place, a welcome, and a home!”

It must have been an inspiration somewhat akin to this that influenced Sir John Macdonald, when, in spite of the opposition of many of his political friends, as well as the deadly opposition of his political foes, he never gave up, never wavered in his determination to push forward in building the great Canadian Pacific Railway, until it was an accomplished fact, a fact of which the



whole Dominion to-day is so justly proud, and for which the whole British Empire is justly thankful.

It is evident that the now world-famous North-West Royal Mounted Police Force had its origin in that Report; in fact, the whole fabric of the government of the North-West was, at first, based upon its suggestions and recommendations. These are some of the reasons why I stated, at the beginning of this paper, that the present generation of Canadians know little or nothing of a man to whom Canada owes so much.

Lieut. Butler, the author and hero of "The Great Lone Land," was the same who, as General Butler, was in command of the British forces in South Africa before hostilities began in the Boer War. He made another famous report, this time to the British Government. He told them faithfully, truthfully, of the magnitude of the undertaking, and of the force it would be necessary to send out to successfully meet the Boers in the field. The British Government would not, or dare not, believe him, and recalled him forthwith. We all know now what that mistake cost the British Empire.

It was this same Lieut. Butler who, as chairman of an investigating commission, fearless of consequences, exposed the gigantic frauds that had been perpetrated in the Supply Department of the South African Army—an exposure that stirred all Englishmen to the depths and made of himself, for the time being, the most abused man in England.

As a writer, as well as a soldier, he was equally fearless. There seemed to be inherent in his nature a wholesome contempt for anything like shirking truth for the mere sake of pleasing officialdom or of winning popularity. This is evident from his bitter denunciation of the purchase system and of the treatment of the rank and file at a time when he had everything to lose and nothing to gain by it. It was a loyal devotion to truth and justice that seemed to be his guide, rather than self-interest or the interest of a party or of officialdom.

Some idea may be formed of the popularity of Lieut. Butler as an author from the fact that his first book, "The Great Lone Land," had, in 1891, run through its fourteenth edition in England.

Three years after making his journey from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains, Lieut. Butler made another and somewhat similar journey to the Athabasca country, and upon his return

published another famous book, to which he gave the title of "The Great North Land," which gave further evidence of his wonderful powers of description, and also added greater weight and color to his previous prophetic visions of the future of the "garden and the wilderness" which are to-day being so palpably verified. In the story of this journey his favorite dog, "Serf-Vola," takes the place of poor "Blackie" as his companion and friend, but the favorite dog was not destined to meet with such a tragic end as the equally favorite horse, for Serf-Vola lived to finish the journey and to come east with its master and to be admired, flattered and lionized, and to be finally taken on a trip to England.

Later in his career Butler published other books, among which are the "History of the 69th Regiment" and "The Failure of a Mission to the King of Akim." This mission is referred to by General Wolseley in his remarks concerning the part Capt. Butler took in the Ashantee War.

I have now come to that point where, with due humility, I would venture to give expression to some thoughts that have suggested themselves during the preparation of the foregoing pages. If I may be allowed to repeat an expression used by Lieut. Butler, I would say that "I see" that same wilderness to which he alludes fast becoming a veritable garden. In times not so very long ago that Great Lone Land gave life and sustenance to millions of the wild buffalo, while now, instead, it yields sustenance sufficient for millions of human beings. Conditions that never cease ringing their changes have swept back the buffalo as the higher order of life pushed forward its claims to "earth and air." Even the red man, who was once lord over this immense territory, is now confined to a few isolated spots, where he is little less than a public charge on the race that pushed him back.

Again "I see" the people from all the nations of Europe joining together and making up that mighty wave of humanity which Lieut. Butler only saw in imagination, overleaping the Atlantic and flowing on till it reaches those "fertile glades that fringe the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains."

Still again "I see" vast railway systems throwing out their bands of steel at a rate that astonishes the world. I see cities and towns and villages springing up as if by some superhuman agency; universities, colleges, schools of all descriptions; mines of gold,

silver; copper, iron and coal, yielding up their treasures of wealth from the untold stores that have been hidden away, stored up for man's needs, from the foundation of the earth itself. All this I see as a present, tangible, veritable fact.

But what of the future? What does time hold in her womb for this Great Lone Land of the past, this wonderful, prosperous land of the present? May we not be permitted to speculate, even modestly, as to what may take place? If, in the thirty-six years since Lieut. Butler, for lack of human audience, was forced to address himself to earth and air, such changes have been wrought, may we not venture to speculate on what may be the conditions thirty-six years hence? A great nation in the Far East, of which we knew little or nothing thirty-six years ago, has since that time sprung to the front rank of the great powers of the world. Thirty-six years ago Japan had, perhaps, as great a population as she has to-day, but she had no ships, no railroads, no foreign trade, and, we might add, no government. But she had a religion of patriotism, and through it she became the world power she is to-day. And yet she owns barely enough territory to grow sustenance for her present population. Here, I am tempted to ask, what would Japan do if she possessed our great fertile lands of the Far West, or, rather, what would she not do?

We, in Canada, are not lacking in patriotism, and we own almost boundless territory in fertile lands, but we *are* lacking in population. What we want first of all is more people to till the soil that is now lying waste, and to reap the harvests—more people to build necessary railroads to carry away to market the products of the soil—more people to build irrigating canals to add to the fertile land—more people to work our coal mines, to furnish fuel sufficient for the ever and rapidly increasing demands. If this be granted, if it is admitted that we want laboring men to carry on these great and necessary enterprises, then, is it not a labor worthy of all toil of hand and brain on the part of those who rule the land to make every available effort to meet that need? If "it be a thing to be desired" that there should be hewers of wood and drawers of water in this great growing country to do that class of work, which neither our own native citizens, nor yet those people who come from Europe and the United States, are equal, or willing, to do, but who, instead, are occupying the lands as

farmers and thereby adding to that already urgent demand for laborers, then I would ask, Why not induce another human wave, one that would roll across the Pacific from the Far East, where there are millions of human beings packed so closely together that they are constantly facing a state of starvation?

Again, I would ask, Why do we practically say to the people of all Europe, "Come over and help us," while we say, practically, to the people of Asia, "We don't want you," and pass laws to keep them out?

Asia, at once the birth-place and cradle of the human race and of civilization, the source of our religion and our morality, our literature, our art, our tradition—Asia, where nations exist that have withstood the shocks of time and change for unknown centuries before our America was discovered, or even dreamed of—is it to the people of that Asia we dare to say, "Keep away! you are an inferior race of men"?

It is not my intention to here discuss the superiority or inferiority of different races, but to simply propound the question, Upon what grounds do we people of Canada presume to hold that we are superior to the people of Asia as a whole, and to such an extent that we deem it necessary to pass laws to prohibit them coming to us, while we make no objection to the coming of people from any nation or country in Europe? Is it the result of prejudice on our part, or is it ignorance, or both? Or is it legislation in favor of a class that wields influence enough to control our legislatures? Or is it a fact that we *know* the Asiatic to be so far inferior to the European that we must discriminate? Let us inquire, for a moment, wherein the difference exists.

It cannot be his color, for we admit the Negro; it cannot be his religion, for we admit the Doukhobor and Mormon; it cannot be his morals, for we have no standard gauge for morality; it cannot be his unthriftfulness; it cannot be his disregard for law and order. If, then, he is sober, industrious, law-abiding, thrifty, what more would we have?

Let me ask again, Is it because the United States have set the example and we think we must follow so great a precedent? If so, let us take warning in time, for President Roosevelt has no more disquieting question on hand to settle to-day than the undoing of that same discriminating legislation by the State of California.

"We have as much to learn from the Japanese as the Japanese have to learn from us" are words the President used in his message to Congress on the subject.

We want to sell to the peoples of the Far East our surplus wheat and flour, and to trade with them generally, while we say to them, by our laws, You are an inferior race! We are willing to trade with you, but you must not expect to be treated as our equals or be allowed to come into our country and compete with us, even as hewers of wood and drawers of water.

What does the open door in the Far East mean to us, and what the closed door in the Far West to them? Will they see reciprocity to any great extent in it? These are questions it may be well to take to heart before more harm is done, for as surely as those Eastern peoples are rapidly rising in knowledge and power, so surely it is that they will resent what, to them, must appear to be pride, arrogance, supercilious presumption and mendacity.

Let any man carefully read Alfred Stead's "Great Japan" and then say, if he dare, that we are a superior race of people, or that they are an inferior race. In a preface to this book, Lord Rosebery says that "Japan is the most efficient nation in the world to-day."

It is said a Royal Prince of Japan is shortly to visit Canada and pass through to British Columbia on his way home. Will any one suppose for a moment that he, or those with him, will not carry back a faithful report to their Government of what they learn on the journey through Canada? They will not be overwhelmed with either our national or racial greatness; they will not be blinded by our obsequious entertainments and hospitality. They will see and know us just as we are—our weaknesses, our prejudices, our presumption and our ignorance. They will see and know that the god we worship is Mammon and not Christ, as we profess. They will know our government, both federal and provincial, to be the very extreme of government by party, and they will know of all the influences that control and make up that party. The Japanese, be he prince or subject, has a trick of learning all about such things in an incredibly short time and in a very quiet, unpretending way.

But they will learn something more than all this, something vastly more important to them and to us. They will see a country

of vast dimensions, with illimitable resources, sparsely occupied by a mixed but vigorous and progressive people, under institutions that give free scope to energy and ability. They will see possibilities too immense to be grasped, backed by conditions more favorable than are to be found anywhere else in the world—conditions that are the very antipodes of those pertaining to their own overcrowded country.

Under such circumstances I cannot but think that Japan, the Far East of Europe and Asia, and Canada, the Far West of Europe and America, are destined to become, in the near future, very closely allied by mutual interests; that the ships of Japan will seek the ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert rather than those of San Francisco or Portland.

While writing these lines I have halted to open my daily paper, and the first item of news to attract my attention is as follows:

**“ EXCLUSION OF INDIANS FRAUGHT WITH DANGER.**

**“ PROTEST AGAINST DENIAL OF RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP IN TRANSVAAL.**

“ Calcutta, Dec. 27.—The Indian National Congress, now in session here, adopted a resolution to-day, expressing the indignation of the delegates that Indians are denied the rights of citizens in the Transvaal, and voicing the opinion that such a policy is fraught with danger to the Empire.”

This gives rise to the reflection that President Kruger and his party, who denied the rights of citizenship, “sowed to the wind and reaped the whirlwind.” And yet it would seem that the Transvaal, under the supreme rule of Great Britain, has already forgotten that fatal lesson. The genius of the world to-day is against any such line of policy. Equal rights to all civilized peoples, equal opportunities to all who are willing to toil and struggle for existence under the laws of the land, is a doctrine that has taken deep root, regardless of race or color. This is not the result of socialism, but rather of that inherent altruism that is to be found to a greater or less degree in all members of the human race. To give it a more definite name, we might call it the “modern cosmopolitanism” of the world.

To take a few thousands from the lowest class of the Chinese and plant them in a slave-pen in a South African mine, to be treated

there like brute beasts, slaves of the most greedy and heartless of corporations, and then to say, This is sufficient evidence that these are people not fit to be admitted to our country much less to become citizens, and to make of this case a sufficient cause for condemning four hundred millions of the inhabitants of China—I say, to do this is the height of folly and injustice.

The following item is from to-day's paper:

### “CHINA, IN FAMINE, ASKS AID.

“GOVERNMENT WILL APPEAL FOR \$1,250,000 TO RELIEVE STARVATION.

“Victoria, B.C., Dec. 28.—Advices by the steamship *Tosu Maru* say that China has decided to appeal to Europe and the United States for \$1,250,000 for relief of famine sufferers in Central China, where 10,000,000 Chinese are facing starvation this winter.

“The famine threatens to equal the appalling one of thirty years ago, which destroyed hundreds of thousands of people. From one point the outlook is worse than then, as the districts are now more thickly populated.”

No doubt Canada will be asked to assist, and no doubt she will readily grant a sum of money for such a worthy purpose. But, let me ask, could we not go further—could we not say to these starving millions, or to some of them, “Come over to our great Far West, and there you will find work in plenty and sustenance in plenty for twenty—fifty—one hundred thousand men who are willing to work.”

In view of the wants of the great railway systems under construction, on the one hand, and the starving millions on the other, who are crying to strangers for help, would it not be the most natural and reasonable thing to do? Would it not also be the true, sane policy under the circumstances?

If I were to ask General Sir W. F. Butler to-day for his opinion of what the true policy of the Government of British Columbia would be, as well as that of the Government at Ottawa, on this subject, I am almost certain that he would reply: “Let British Columbia open her doors, reach out across the Pacific Ocean and shake hands with Japan and with China. Let trade and commerce be encouraged to the fullest extent between us. Let meaningless social barriers be thrown down. Let prejudice of

color, race and religion be scattered to the winds. Let the whole people of the Dominion, instead of wasting millions of their money in a vain and impossible effort to convert these Far East peoples amidst their present surroundings, their beliefs and traditions of thousands of years, first make of our own Canada a Christian country in reality and in fact, then ask those peoples to come and live among us and see what real Christianity is, what a real Christian country is, and how a real Christian people live."

If this could be realized the Christian religion would not be the thing for mockery and scorn that it now is, to a great extent, among the peoples of the Far East.

This young nation of Canada has now the opportunity of its life to show that spirit of true Christianity which, it must be confessed, is so sadly lacking in the older countries that go to make up the Christian world of to-day. It has also the opportunity of showing that political wisdom which, it must also be admitted by thinking people, is still a thing to be hoped for, prayed for, by all people, of all colors and all races, and in all countries, in all the world.

Stratford, Ont., Jan. 1st, 1907.